

Birth Trauma Awareness Week

July 16 - 22 #BTAW23



Up to
45%
of new moms
experience
birth trauma

Birth trauma is any physical or emotional distress experienced during or after childbirth. It is important to remember that what may be considered routine to some could be a distressing or traumatic experience to others.

According to the National Institutes of Health, up to 45% of new mothers experience birth trauma—and the effects can continue long after the birth itself.¹

Care provider actions and interactions can significantly influence the trauma experienced during birth. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends physicians become familiar with the trauma-informed model of care and strive to universally implement a trauma-informed approach across all levels of their practice with close attention to avoiding stigmatization and prioritizing resilience.²

Four C's of Trauma Informed Care³

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Calm: Pay attention to how you are feeling when you are caring for the patient. Breathe deeply and calm yourself to model and promote calmness for the patient, yourself and your co-workers. Practice calming exercises (deep breathing, grounding) with patients. Cultivate understanding of trauma and its effects to promote a calm, patient attitude toward others (patients and co-workers.) | Contain: When exploring trauma history with a patient, only ask for a level of detail that allows you both to feel emotionally and physically safe, respects the amount of time you have available for the patient, and allows you to offer important treatment options. We can provide education, resources and referrals to trauma-specific care without requiring disclosure of trauma details, which facilitates an interaction that supports care without overwhelming the patient or provider. | Care: Practice self-care and compassion for yourself, the patient and your coworkers. Adopt a compassionate attitude toward oneself and others, sharing messages of support, de-stigmatizing adverse coping behaviors and adhering to the practice of cultural humility to promote healing. | Cope: Emphasize coping skills, positive relationships and interventions that build hope and resiliency. Inquire about practices that help the patient feel better. Provide evidence-based treatment for the sequelae of trauma including substance use and mental illness. Celebrate cultural practices that increase well-being and social connection. |
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Risk Factors for Birth Trauma

There are many factors—both physical and emotional—that can contribute to birth trauma, including:¹

- Not receiving the care or support expected from hospital staff
- A childbirth experience that was not what was hoped for
- Birth complications, including a vaginal tear or too much bleeding
- Emergency C-section or the use of forceps or other medical devices
- Mom or baby suffering a birth injury
- Baby requiring medical attention after the birth

While many circumstances contributing to trauma during pregnancy and postpartum are emergent or unavoidable, there are positive steps providers can take to reduce the risks of trauma during distressing events.

Experiences like these can have a traumatic impact for **new parents**. Traumatic experiences can lead to changes in a person's:

| Behavior | Emotions |
|--|---|
|  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drinking alcohol• Lashing out• Overeating• Spending money |  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low self-esteem• Panic attacks• Relationship issues• Stress and anxiety |

Research indicates women find debriefing or birth listening and reflections valuable.⁴ Sharing birth stories, having enough social supports and expressive writing were perceived as additional means of support. Guilt for feeling emotionally unwell at an observed time of happiness adds an additional layer of complexity. Women and partners may need support in identifying perinatal mental health symptoms. Partners may be reluctant to seek help for their own perinatal mental health. They can feel unjustified talking about birth trauma when they witnessed the trauma as opposed to women who go through the physical process of birth.²

Kansas Medicaid provides coverage for perinatal mental health screening up to 12 months postpartum.

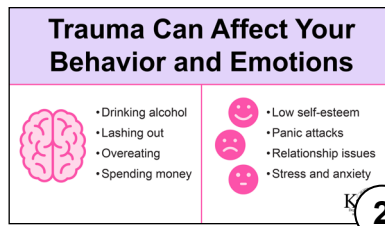
Resources

- [KDHE Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- [Perinatal Psychiatric Provider Consult Line](#)
- [Medicaid Billing Guidance for Perinatal Mental Health Screening](#)
- [March of Dimes](#)
- [PSI – Birth Trauma Support Group](#)
- [National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#)
- [When Survivors Give Birth](#) - by Penny Simkin, Comprehensive guide for care providers

Social Media Posts



1



2



3



4



5

1. Not All Births Go As Planned/No todos los nacimientos salen según lo planeado

According to the National Institutes of Health, up to 45% of new mothers experience birth trauma—and the effects can continue long after the birth itself. Get the support you deserve. Call 1-833-TLC-MAMA [1-833-852-6262], contact your health care provider or ask a friend or family member for support. #BTAW23

Según los Institutos Nacionales de Salud, hasta el 45% de las nuevas madres experimentan traumas en el nacimiento y los efectos pueden continuar mucho después del nacimiento en sí. Obtenga el apoyo que se merece. Llame al 1-833-TLC-MAMA [1-833-852-6262], comuníquese con su proveedor de atención médica o pídale apoyo a un amigo o familiar. #BTAW23

2. When the Happiest Time of Your Life, Isn't the Happiest Time of Your Life/Cuando el momento más feliz de su vida, no es el momento más feliz de su vida

The myth persists that having a baby is supposed to be a natural, joyous event, so you might find it hard to come to terms with a childbirth experience that wasn't what you expected. You might be ashamed of your feelings or even fearful of being judged, so you bury your emotions in the hope they'll go away. Unresolved trauma doesn't just go away. Get the support you deserve. Text or Call 1-833-TLC-MAMA [1-833-852-6262] #BTAW23

Persiste el mito de que se supone que tener un bebé es un evento natural y alegre, por lo que es posible que le resulte difícil aceptar una experiencia de parto que no fue lo que esperaba. Es posible que se avergüence de sus sentimientos o incluso tenga miedo de ser juzgada, así que oculta sus emociones con la esperanza de que desaparezcan. El trauma sin resolver no desaparece simplemente. Obtenga el apoyo que se merece. Envíe un mensaje de texto o llame al 1-833-TLC-MAMA [1-833-852-6262] #BTAW23

3. Partners Are Equal Parents/Las parejas son padres iguales

Watching a traumatic birth experience can leave you feeling helpless. Some partners may feel guilty for having emotional distress after watching their loved one experience pregnancy and childbirth. Share your story as a way to heal by connecting with those who share similar experiences. Call 1-800-944-4PPD [1-800-944-4773] #BTAW23

Presenciar una experiencia de parto traumática puede dejarle con un sentimiento de impotencia. Algunas parejas pueden sentirse culpables por tener angustia emocional después de ver a su ser querido experimentar el embarazo y el parto. Comparta su historia como una forma de sanar conectándose con quienes comparten experiencias similares. Llame al 1-800-944-4PPD [1-800-944-4773] #BTAW23

4. Tell Your Story/Cuente su historia

Writing about your birth story is a powerful way to heal from a frightening birth experience. As you set out to write your story, ask your partner, doula or someone else you trust to support your journey. March of Dimes has also put together six steps to help you get started. Call 1-833-TLC-MAMA [1-833-852-6262] #BTAW23

marchofdimes.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/ISWM-Trauma-InfoGraphic-BirthStory-Interactive-v1.pdf

Escribir la historia de su parto es una forma poderosa de superar una experiencia de parto aterradora. Cuando te dispongas a escribir tu historia, pídele a tu pareja, a una asistente o a alguien de confianza que te apoye en el proceso. March of Dimes también ha reunido seis pasos para ayudarte a empezar. Llame al 1-833-TLC-MAMA [1-833-852-6262] #BTAW23

marchofdimes.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/ISWM-Trauma-InfoGraphic-BirthStory-Interactive-v1.pdf

5. 1-833-TLC-MAMA

The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline offers a text messaging feature. If you prefer texting over talking on the phone, this may be the perfect option for you. Text 1-833-852-6262 to connect with a trained counselor who can provide support, resources and information on maternal mental health. Whether you're a new or expecting parent, or supporting a friend, family member, client or patient, the Hotline is here for you. Don't hesitate to reach out for help – The Hotline is just a text away. #MaternalMentalHealth #TLCMAMA #BTAW23

La Línea Nacional de Salud Mental Materna ofrece una función de mensajería de texto. Si usted prefiere enviar mensajes de texto que hablar por teléfono, esta puede ser la opción perfecta para usted. Envíe un mensaje de texto al 1-833-852-6262 para ponerse en contacto con un consejero capacitado que puede proporcionarle apoyo, recursos e información sobre salud mental materna. Tanto si acaba de ser madre o espera tener un hijo o si está apoyando a un amigo, familiar, cliente o paciente, la línea directa está aquí para usted. No dude en pedir ayuda: la línea directa está a sólo un mensaje de texto de distancia. #MaternalMentalHealth #TLCMAMA #BTAW23



1. The toll of birth trauma on your health. March of Dimes. (n.d.). marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/postpartum/toll-birth-trauma-your-health
2. Caring for patients who have experienced trauma. ACOG. (n.d.). acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2021/04/caring-for-patients-who-have-experienced-trauma
3. Trauma-informed care overview - aces aware. (n.d.). acesaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Provider-Toolkit-Trauma-Informed-Care-Overview.pdf
4. Delicate, A., Ayers, S., & McMullen, S. (2020, October 2). Health Care Practitioners' views of the support women, partners, and the couple relationship require for birth trauma: current practice and potential improvements. Primary Health Care Research & Development. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7576522/